B.I.T.S.

by

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Note on all interior sets: the percentage below each scene heading in the **<pov instructions>** indicates how much damage and trashing is to be done to each set, assuming the first scene is 100% and the worst of it. Time references (ie: "(X) hours ago") count back from the opening scene/"present".

Darkness (a black computer screen.) Binary script floods the display; superimpose opening credits. When the credits are done, the camera pans back to show the script is scrolling on a computer screen. The terminal next to it is also displaying binary, and sparks are coming from an input drive. Camera begins quick pan off the computer screen to begin scene. Sounds fade in of mechanical mayhem and sickly electronics (sparks, grinding gears, etc.) [Conspicuously missing is any type of alarm or warning siren.]

1   INT. SHIP

         <pov = LEE, time = present, 100%>

         Note: this (and the next scene) should have a slight silvery/monochromatic tint to it, with slight silvery light trails, etc.

         Fast paced, schizophrenic camerawork: subject is moving quickly and erratically through a badly damaged spaceship. The ship is falling apart: sparks and debris everywhere, much of the lighting is off or malfunctioning/strobing. Camera enters Bridge.

2   INT. BRIDGE

         LANIER is at a console, his back to the camera. His left hand is bandaged. View passes by several computer monitors. Some display normal texts and menus, most are scrolling binary. The view stops on an inoperative one, and we see LEE's face in the reflection; his hollow-eyes betray a wild, maniacal intensity. LEE smashes the screen with the pistol he is holding. LANIER turns around at the sound.

                         LANIER
                   Lee! You scared me. Tineel said to
                   launch the S.O.S. distress, but I
                   can't find the damned thing....

         Camera advances on LANIER, who frowns.

>   LANIER
>   Hey, are you okay?

>   LEE
>   (off camera/voiceover)
>   I'm fine, but you're not.

View shows the gun rise and point right between LANIER's wide, surprised eyes. The barrel is about three feet away from his face. LEE's thumb snakes out and cocks the hammer back.

Scene freezes. Camera swings around, showing the scene from a 3rd person perspective. Background melts in a cascade of binary script to be replaced by a different part of ship.

3   INT. CARGO HOLD

<pov = 3rd person; time = 24 hours earlier; 0%>

The images of LEE and LANIER melt slightly, replaced by what they looked like 24 hours earlier (LANIER's hand is unbandaged, etc.) They are prepping a survey explorer robot. Instead of pointing a gun at LANIER, LEE is handing him a screwdriver. BLOOM is also present and helping.

>   LANIER
>   (reaching up to accept tool
>   from LEE)
>   Thanks.

He takes the tool, and continues telling a story to all.

>   LANIER (CONT)
>   Anyway, he dives down and does this
>   awesome one-handed catch as he hits
>   the backboard, and then does this
>   power-squat kick off of it. And
>   damned if he didn't rip his pants
>   wide open!

He begins tinkering with the probe, everybody laughs.

>   LANIER (CONT)
>   So he's flying across the field
>   with his ass flapping in plain
>   sight of a billion viewers, and
>   nobody can do anything but stare at
>   his butt-cheeks, so he scores
>   unopposed! Game!

The other two nod appreciatively.

                    BLOOM
          Yeah, Kobiashi's that team's saving
          grace. You don't dare foul him,
          because his antics become twice as
          embarrassing, and you lose due to
          humiliation, regardless what the
          score is.

LANIER grunts in approval as makes a final adjustment.

                    LANIER
          Okay, try that.

BLOOM presses a button on a console, is apparently satisfied
by the results.

                    BLOOM
          Good.

He looks at a clipboard computer.

                    BLOOM (CONT)
          Next is the Geiger counter.

                    LANIER
          I keyed the 'counter to ignore the
          ship's engine signature, so it
          should just read what's out there.

He points at the airlock, then flips a switch inside the
probe.

                    LANIER (CONT)
          Geiger on.

                    BLOOM
               (looks at the console)
          Geiger on, just background static.

He does something to his compuclip.

                    BLOOM (CONT)
          Not that you'll need it; we didn't
          detect anything from orbit.

                    LANIER
          Probably not, but we might as well
          check while we're here.

                    BLOOM
          Hey, if you wanna run up the
          clock,it's your call.

                         LANIER
          Well, the whole point of hiring you
          guys to fly us out here was so we
          can take a proper look at this
          place. Why go to all this trouble
          if we're going to do it half-assed?
          At least we can tell if it's worth
          coming back to. This planet's
          probably a rock, but the
          spectrographs in orbit were unusual
          enough to merit getting a few
          samples. You know the drill.

                         BLOOM
          Yeah; and speaking of 'drill'...

LANIER leans back, away from the robot, and a soft *whirr* of
a drill is heard.

                    BLOOM AND LANIER
          Good.

                         LEE
            (to no one in particular)
          Yeah, PASE paid for two weeks'
          exploration of four planets, and
          they're gonna squeeze out every
          second of it, aren't they?

                         BLOOM
          Yeah, Lee, but you know if we find
          something, it'll be worth it, and
          even if we don't, you and I still
          get paid by Mister Lanier here.

                         LANIER
          You mean paid by PASE. Remember:
          I'm just a company lackey; I *wish* I
          had control of the corporate
          checkbook. Sure as hell give myself
          a higher budget than what those
          tight-sphinctered fiends allotted
          me for this mission...

                         BLOOM
          But how do *you* *really* feel,
          Lanier?

LANIER chuckles, then fiddles inside the robot.

                         LANIER
          Anyway, now that we have a better
          idea of the gravity out there, we
                       (MORE)

                    LANIER (cont'd)
          should probably recalibrate the
          gyroscope in the centrifuge.

BLOOM types something into the keyboard.

                    BLOOM
          Gotcha. Point eight eight I think,
          let me check.

                    LEE
          Oh, speaking of gravity, and back
          to what you were saying with
          Kobiashi's game-winning
          ripped-pants catch...

Everybody starts chuckling.

                    LEE (CONT)
          ...I'll admit it: Kobiashi & crew
          have a great defense, maybe the
          best zero-g defense around, but
          they just can't score points. Look
          what happened when they played
          Vatican City last month: tied
          zero-zero.

                    BLOOM
          Man's got a point, Lanier. they're
          good, but they're not going all the
          way. They won't even make it to May
          Mania playoffs.

                    LANIER
          We'll see. Even then, a man can
          dream, can't he?

                    LEE
               (snorts derisively)
          Just like you're dreaming about
          finding anything out in this waste
          of universal space.

LANIER leans out of the robot.

                    LANIER
          Hey, Lee, can you tone down your
          pessimism? It's interfering with
          our chances.

LEE snorts derisively, but looks away.

                    LANIER (CONT)
               (to BLOOM)
          You said point eight eight, right?

                    BLOOM
          Yeah.

                    LANIER
               (to LEE)
          I need a sonic needle-nose.

LEE hands LANIER another tool, and the shot freezes.
Background melts in binary script, revealing Bridge from
Scene 2, then LEE and LANIER melt slightly, returning to
their previous appearances (ideally the same pose): LEE
pointing a gun at LANIER.

4   INT. BRIDGE

<pov = LANIER; time = present; 100%>

Camera swings to LANIER's pov: looking down the barrel of
LEE's pistol.

                    LEE
          BITS bit ya. You're one of 'em.

He pulls the trigger. View freezes on gun blast. Camera
swings to third person perspective. Background melts in
binary script, revealing a different part of the ship.

5   INT. COMPUTER ROOM 1

<pov = 3rd person; time = 18 hours earlier; 5%>

LEE and LANIER melt next, showing them about 18 hours
earlier. LEE is holding a small, hand-held machine that is
in the middle of sparking.

                    LEE
               (recoiling from the spark)
          Aah!

                    LANIER
          Oh, and be careful: it bites.

LEE looks at LANIER and smiles condescendingly in thanks of
the late warning, then sets object down on a worktable.

                       LEE
           Well, if it's sparking, it's got
           power.

                     LANIER
           Like I said, I was charging it up,
           but it won't turn on like it
           doesn't have juice. So I don't know
           what the problem is.

                     LEE
           Well, I'll take a look at it.

LEE reaches over for a small toolkit, quickly finds a long,
thin tool and begins disassembling the back of LANIER's
device. He removes a small battery pack from it. All the
while, LANIER is prattling on, and LEE's expression becomes
increasingly annoyed with LANIER's continued presence.

                     LANIER
           Yeah, I dicked around with it
           quickly, but couldn't figure it
           out, so thought I'd let you play
           with it. I won't need it for a
           couple of hours, until when the
           Rover gets back with some samples.

                     LEE
            (irritated at the obvious)
           Sure.

LANIER lingers.

                     LEE
           I said I'd let you know.

LANIER finally takes the hint and exits. LEE returns his
attention to the widget, hooking up a new, external power
pack to the exposed interior. He flips a switch, and a red
light goes on, and a voltometer-type display comes to life.
He puts them aside, and looks around at the entrances.
Satisfied he is alone, he begins to fish something out of
his shirt pocket.

                     BLOOM
            (over intercom)
           Hey, Lee?

LEE sighs sarcastically at the interruption, turns on the
intercom, and then returns to his pocket. He pulls out a
pack of cigarettes, but keeps fishing.

                         LEE
               What's up, Bloom?

                         BLOOM
                    (over intercom)
               I'm having a brain bubble: how are
               dynasplicers grounded: e positive
               or e negative?

LEE thinks a moment as he sets the cigarettes aside on the
workbench.

                         LEE
               Negative.
                    (pause and frown)
               Why you fucking around with the
               dynasplicer?

                         BLOOM
                    (over intercom)
               Long version or short version?

                         LEE
               Short version.

LEE resumes pocket fishing.

                         BLOOM
                    (over intercom)
               Whoever designed this ship was an
               idiot.

                         LEE
                    (shrugs)
               Yeah, but we already knew that...

The power light and voltometer on the pack both go out, but
LEE does not notice.

                         LEE (CONT)
               ...Okay, so gimme the long version.

LEE finally finds a small black vial with an eyedropper lid.
He holds it up to his face and deftly untwists the lid.

                         BLOOM
                    (over intercom)
               The auxiliary charger in cell D
               forward had a power spike and then
               went off line. Blew a ring of fuses
               like dominoes. That's easy enough
               to fix, but unfortunately the
               genius that built this ship put the
                         (MORE)

                    BLOOM (cont'd)
          box right behind the dynasplicer.
          Not only that, but put it in such a
          half-assed way that you gotta be on
          top of the damned thing to get at
          it. I don't feel like getting my
          sac zapped off for the sake of
          replacing a goddamn fuse.

                    LEE
          Pussy; it's only 150 volts. Your
          sac can handle that...

He gets the eyedropper ready, then cocks his head at the
sound of approaching footsteps and voices. He curses
silently, then quickly begins reassembling his dropper vial.

                    LEE (CONT)
          ...Yeah, so... you said the fuses
          had blown?

EMERSON and TINEEL enter, their talking becoming audible.
LEE has just hidden his paraphernalia back in his shirt. The
smokes are still out on the worktable.

                    TINEEL
          ...granted, all that plankton made
          the atmosphere breathable, but who
          wants a water-world except
          colonists?

                    EMERSON
          True, but there's always some cult
          that wants their own planet and
          who'd be willing to buy...

                    TINEEL
               (interrupting)
          Ah, Lee, there you are. Are you
          busy?

                    LEE
               (smiles ingratiatingly, though
               with a touch of loathing)
          Actually, yeah, I've got a couple
          things going right now.

                    TINEEL
          Is smoking one of them?

LEE frowns, then follows TINEEL's gaze to the crumpled pack.

                     LEE
Oh, no sir.

TINEEL stares at him skeptically; their is the faintest
suggestion he is sniffing the air for smoke.

                     LEE
That's just an emergency pack I
kept in the toolbox; I'd forgotten
about it. Found it when I was
working on this.

                   TINEEL
Uh huh. So what *are* you doing?

                     LEE
Oh, uh... I'm fixing one of
Lanier's widgets, plus helping
Bloom with a problem with the,
uhhh...

                  BLOOM
     (over intercom)
Dynasplicer grinding.

                     LEE
     (nodding solemnly)
Dynasplicer grinding.

                 EMERSON
Is there a problem with the
dynasplicer?

View freezes on EMERSON and TINEEL. Background melts in
binary script, revealing Medlab at present (in about the
same condition as the Bridge at present. The walls have
various impressionist paintings for ambiance.)

6   INT. MEDLAB

Camera swings to EMERSON's pov. [sometime during scene,
EMERSON should be reflected off something]

<pov = EMERSON; time = present; 100%>

                 EMERSON
     (off camera/voiceover)
All non-autonomous systems on this
ship are either down outright or up
but infected. All of them, Tineel,
and that includes navigation,
flight, and life support. Internal
            (MORE)

                         EMERSON (cont'd)
          atmosphere and temperature will
          become uninhabitable in about
          15 hours. Even if we can fix that
          in time, shipwide the power use is
          in an exponential j curve, and at
          this rate we've got at most 30
          hours before the engine either
          melts down or blows up... or both.
          A meltdown would give us a huge
          hull breach *at the least*. If it
          just blows up, the blast range will
          be substantial and quite
          vaporizing.

                         TINEEL
          Wonderful. So I guess we have
          15 hours to either figure out how
          to fix everything, or get out of
          the blast radius.

Camera bobs to indicate EMERSON is nodding in agreement.

                         EMERSON
               (off camera/voiceover)
          I'd rather we try to beat this
          thing than abandon ship. I'm sure
          Lee'd feel the same. After all,
          it's our ship.

                         TINEEL
          I understand that, but we can't
          really risk spending too much time
          on the effort, because so far we've
          done nothing but fail at it. Before
          you get back to it, I really think
          we should prep the life raft. Just
          as a preemptive precaution, and
          better sooner than later. We'll do
          it as soon as as soon as Lanier and
          Lee get back.

                         EMERSON
               (off camera/voiceover)
          Where are Lanier and Lee, anyway?
          They've been gone a *while*.

Image freezes. View shifts to third person. Background melts
with binary script into Cargo Hold 10 hours ago. View of
TINEEL and EMERSON melts to what they looked like 10 hours
ago; BLOOM and LANIER are also present, the latter standing
next to the Rover robot. It is now weather-beaten and
dirty.

7   INT. CARGO HOLD (10 HOURS EARLIER)

          <pov = 3rd person; time = 10 hours earlier; 35%>

                              LANIER
                    I didn't even bother having it
                    bring back any samples from the
                    crater, because I could tell from
                    the quick-check Rover did that it
                    wasn't grade. We already knew it
                    wasn't pure Malardite to begin
                    with, but I was hoping there'd be a
                    few pockets of purer quality.
                    Didn't find any, and doubt we will,
                    either.

                              TINEEL
                    So we've found a crater full of
                    crap?

                              LANIER
                    Pretty much. Malardite has its
                    uses, but it's just uncommon, not
                    rare, and not worth the cost of a
                    mining enterprise. Hell, that
                    meteor isn't even all that big to
                    begin with, even if it was pure. To
                    be honest, I was kind of surprised
                    you wanted to check it out in the
                    first place.

                              TINEEL
                    As you said: Malardite has its
                    uses, and it's uncommon. I'm just
                    running this by the PASE
                    exploration playbook.

                              LANIER
                    Sure; but what's out there is an
                    impure alloy. Aside from the cost
                    of mining it, there's the
                    additional expense of having to get
                    all that aluminum out of it. I knew
                    it was shit just by how easy
                    Rover's drill went into it. Pure
                    Malardite's harder than a diamond,
                    and this...
                         (he taps Rover)
                    ...has a bort tip. If that
                    meteor...

                    BLOOM
               (amusedly)
          Excuse me, uh... *bort*?

                    LANIER
               (seriously)
          Yeah. Three centimeter solid tip.

                    BLOOM
          What is bort?

                    TINEEL
               (immediately and also
               seriously)
          Industrial-grade diamond. Too many
          flaws for gemstone quality, but you
          can still use them for drill tips
          and such.

BLOOM looks at TINEEL with amused surprise.

                    BLOOM
          Okaaaay...

Turns his attention back to LANIER.

                    BLOOM (CONT)
          ...Bort!

LANIER smiles condescendingly, nods politely, and continues
on to TINEEL.

                    LANIER
          Anyway, the short version recap is
          we found shit.

                    TINEEL
          Agreed.

                    LANIER
          Personally, I think that applies
          not only to that meteor crater out
          there, but this whole damned
          planet.

                    TINEEL
          That's your professional opinion?

                    LANIER
          No, my professional opinion is this
          place is a 9.5 on the scatometer.
          However, my PASE opinion is that
          there's nothing else on this rock
                    (MORE)

                    LANIER (cont'd)
that has potential investor
incentive.

                    TINEEL
Okay then. Hopefully we'll have
better luck at the next one, so
let's get moving and find out. How
long will it take you to get Rover
ready for the next run?

                    LANIER
I dunno; should probably scrub him
down, check the treads and the
oil... couple hours. He seems to be
running fine. The atmosphere out
there was very electrical, but
luckily Rover didn't get any
lightning zaps. I want to make sure
he's okay, though. No idea what the
prep time will be for the next
place, but if it's anything like
this chunk, that's...
        (to BLOOM)
...what'd that take us, two hours?

                    BLOOM
Something like that, yeah. Next
place we're going is another rock,
right?

                    LANIER
Yeah; it's actually the closest to
the sun. About the size of the moon
back at Earth. Lots of iron ore;
we'll see what else we find when we
get close enough for a real scan.

                    TINEEL
Flight time there should be about
eight hours; I'll see what Palmer
says for a more precise estimate.

                    EMERSON
The planets' alignment out here
doesn't make for the simplest or
quickest flight paths.

                    TINEEL
True, but the last gas giant alone
has an orbit of several centuries,
and PASE doesn't want to wait
around a couple decades until the
                    (MORE)

                         TINEEL (cont'd)
               system's in a more convenient
               alignment to shave off a few hours
               of flight time.

                         BLOOM
               Hey, it's your dime we're flying
               on.

                         EMERSON
               Thank you, Bloom.

                         TINEEL
               Indeed it is, so let's get going.
               I'll go check with Palmer right
               now, but we originally estimated
               about eight hours if we jump at the
               high end of the sublight spectrum.
               Is that enough time for you to get
               ready, Lanier?

                         LANIER
                    (shrugs)
               Don't see why not.

                         TINEEL
               Okay then.

TINEEL nods curtly at LANIER, and exits. EMERSON looks at
the Rover, and then at the retreating TINEEL. EMERSON
follows after him and leaves. Camera follows. They walk
through an access corridor that is barely wide enough for
them to stand side by side in, but EMERSON purposefully does
not catch up.

                         BLOOM
                    (off camera and fading)
               You know, some of the gunk on your
               Rover here might be really hard to
               scrub off. Maybe we should try some
               bort cleanser.

Camera follows TINEEL and EMERSON into Computer Room 2.

8   INT. COMPUTER ROOM 2 (CONTINUOUS)

LEE is standing on a stool, reaching into an open light
panel on the ceiling. He is changing a long, thin light
tube.

                    TINEEL
          We're leaving, so when you get done
          with that, I need you to do a
          strap-down for launch and sublight.

                    LEE
               (putting finishing touches on
               installing the tube)
          Uh huh.

                    EMERSON
          Lee, do you know where Lake is?

                    LEE
          Last I saw her, she was up on the
          Bridge playing chess with Palmer.
          They both looked bored, so I
          suggested she see if he played.

The new light tube grows increasingly bright.

                    TINEEL
               (without stopping)
          Androids don't get bored.

                    EMERSON
          This is true; we were all randomly
          programmed with hobbies. You know
          that.

The light becomes painfully bright.

                    LEE
          Oh hell yeah I do: you babble on
          more about Rossini...

LEE finally notices the light and squints at it just as it
it gives one final pulse of light and then burns itself out
to darkness; this is accompanied by an electrical popping
sound that should have the same grating effect as nails on a
chalkboard. LEE recoils slightly, but the bulb is still
intact.

TINEEL can tell that something bad has just happened; he
stops and turns around.

                    LEE
          God-damn-dipshit-gypsy-dildo-punk!

He reaches up and pulls out the burnt tube; inside is gray
swirling smoke that is quickly turning an ugly bruise hue.
LEE shakes it disdainfully at EMERSON, who was about to walk
by his stool.

                    LEE
          That's two in a row! Three! Three
          if you count the one that
          originally burnt out! What're you
          doing to me, Emerson? You're in
          charge of supply, so you buying
          cheap piece-of-shit xenon lights
          and pocketing the diff? You know,
          it's not like we got an ton of
          these on board to spare.

                    EMERSON
          Mea culpa. When we get back to
          Tarshish, I'll talk to the guy I
          got them from.

                    LEE
          At least get a refund. You save the
          receipt, you fiend?

                    EMERSON
          Didn't get one. The man didn't have
          the proper forms.

                    TINEEL
          Lee.

                    LEE
          What man was this? The man selling
          supplies out of the back of a black
          mini-hover...

                    TINEEL
               (louder)
          Lee.

LEE sighs with more than slight melodrama, and looks at
TINEEL. Awkward pause.

                    TINEEL
          The strap-down is more important
          than the light. Rig the ship for
          launch and zero-g.

Another awkward pause, and then LEE hops off the stool. As
he rights himself, he casts an unhappy glance at EMERSON,
who just watches him passively.

                    TINEEL
          Don't get me wrong, Lee: you can
          get back to fixing your light once
          we're under way. I just need you to
          prep us for flight first.

                    EMERSON
          I think what he means is, the
          faster we fly out of here, the
          faster we can finish up and go back
          to the fringe of the Wilderness and
          get better lighting supplies.

                    TINEEL
          Thank you, Emerson. So...

He looks expectantly at LEE a moment, and then turns and
leaves. EMERSON puts a finger up to LEE's lips and shakes
his head, silencing whatever caustic comment he knows is
about to come. EMERSON exits, and Camera follows him and
TINEEL making their way to the Bridge.

9   INT. BRIDGE (CONTINUOUS)

LAKE and PALMER are present, sitting opposite each other at
the flight console.

                    LAKE
          Six six three five one five. I'll
          take forty-two for that. Done.

                    PALMER
          Four five one two two four. I'll
          pass, and I'm done.

                    TINEEL
          Palmer?

                    PALMER
          Sir.

TINEEL is about to speak, but LAKE beats him to it.

                    LAKE
          Tineel, did Lanier find anything?

                    TINEEL
          No; we're taking off.

                    EMERSON
              (to LAKE)
          Who won at chess?

                    LAKE
          He did, ten zero.

                    PALMER
          (holding up a quick power fist
          of triumph)
     Go Team Penguin!

                    LAKE
     I noticed the pattern after five
     games, confirmed at ten. I can't
     touch him.

                    PALMER
     Don't sell yourself short; you made
     me work for it several times.
     Androids are usually easy to beat,
     because they typically play one of
     the 88 classic strategies. I never
     could figure out what you were
     doing.

                    LAKE
     Simple: I didn't have a strategy, I
     just improvised based on the
     situation. I never understood
     planning a game out 8 moves in
     advance; the board will have
     changed too much in that time, so a
     long-term strategy is useless.

                    PALMER
     True to an extent, but if you know
     your opponent, you can still
     compensate. Besides, maneuvering
     chess pieces is similar to plotting
     an ultra-light flight. I play a
     lot, to keep in practice.

                    EMERSON
     I can plot ultra-light, but I can
     only beat her 23% of the time. You
     must have done some complicated
     flying.

                    PALMER
     Sometimes.

                    EMERSON
     Have you ever flown in combat?

                    PALMER
     No; I have a standard anti-violence
     chip implant. Why? Have you flown
     in combat?

                    EMERSON
          Once, putting down the uprising at
          the Frederic's Star Perimeter. It's
          how I bought myself out of
          corporate ownership.

TINEEL looks over, annoyed both at the unproductive
chit-chat and the fact that it had drifted to android
sovereignty.

                    PALMER
          Oh, congratulations.

                    TINEEL
              (a little louder than
              necessary)
          Palmer. Prep for flight and start
          plotting a course.

                    PALMER
              (nods obediently)
          Yes, sir. The inner one next, as
          agreed?

                    TINEEL
          Yes.

                    EMERSON
              (to LAKE)
          What game were you playing just
          now?

                    LAKE
              (to PALMER)
          We never did name it.

                    PALMER
              (busying himself at controls
              to his side)
          Well, you suggested the majority of
          the rules, so how about we call it
          Lake's Game.

                    LAKE
          Okay...
              (solemnly, to EMERSON)
          ...We were playing Lake's Game.

                    EMERSON
          Were you winning?

                    LAKE
          Yes.

                    TINEEL
          Well, since you suggested most of
          the rules, I don't doubt it....
                (to PALMER)
          ...Work on that: I expect better
          out of my pilots.

Quick cut to an intercom speaker. There is a burst of grainy
static, over which LEE says something unintelligible.

TINEEL looks irritably at the speaker, then walks over to it
and thumbs a button.

                    TINEEL
                (into speaker)
          What?

TINEEL's voice can be heard from one of the intercom
speakers; it is garbled. He releases the button, and after a
moment, there is another static pulse with more distorted
gibberish.

                    PALMER
          Course plotted and proofread; I can
          fine-tune on the fly. Should take 8
          hours and 18 minutes.

He turns to the computer in front of him and begins flipping
switches.

                    PALMER
          Warming up thrusters.

TINEEL nods at him briefly, and then thumbs the speaker
button again.

                    TINEEL
          Lee, was that you? Please repeat.

Again, there is a distorted echo of this over the intercom.

                    LEE
                (off camera)
          I said we're done with the
          strap-down...

LEE enters the Bridge.

                    LEE (CONT)
          ...but apparently our intercom is
          now on the fritz.

                    TINEEL
               (sourly)
          Wonderful. Well done.

                    LEE
          What, wonderful well done that I
          finished a strap-down in record
          time, thank you, Mr. Lee... or
          wonderful well done that something
          else is broken, you're obviously an
          incompetent slob?

                    EMERSON
          Lee...

                    TINEEL
          You said we're ready? Good; go tell
          Bloom and Lanier to buckle up for
          lift-off.

TINEEL pointedly turns his back on LEE and sits down in a
console chair, making an elaborate display of buckling up.
LEE looks at TINEEL, then exits with a disgusted shake of
his head.

                    EMERSON
          I'm sorry, Mr. Tineel. You have to
          take Lee with a...

                    TINEEL
          Later. And since he's your crewman,
          I'll let you deal with his
          discipline. Right now, let's get
          out of here.

He reaches over and thumbs the intercom.

                    TINEEL
          Prepare for launch.

The speakers broadcast is garbled; TINEEL remembers the
system is broken just as he's saying it.

                    LAKE
               (a little too sweetly)
          Intercom's broken, Mr. Tineel.
          Remember?

TINEEL nods that he does, and assumes perfect posture in his
chair.

                    TINEEL
          Screw it; if they're not buckled in
          by now, it's their own damned
          problem. Palmer?

PALMER, now buckled into his own chair at the flight
console, merely nods, and begins flipping switches and
pressing buttons.

                    PALMER
          Engines off stand-by...
               (flipping more switches)
          ...Primed and ready when you are,
          Sir.

                    TINEEL
          Do it.

PALMER presses a button, and the ship begins to shake
slightly. At the front of the bridge is an observation
window; outside, the swirling clouds begin moving downward.

                    PALMER
          We have lift-off.

Out the window, the clouds are moving more rapidly. PALMER
continues to flip switches and press buttons.

                    PALMER
          Retracting gear...

Close-up of his console, where a subset of switches is
labeled LANDING GEAR. There are four (FRONT, PORT,
STARBOARD, REAR) with red lights above them. Three of them
blink briefly and then shut off, but the FRONT remains lit.
PALMER flips the front switch again. Nothing happens.

                    PALMER
          Forward landing gear is not
          responding.

EMERSON turns to his console, and flips some switches. A
video display comes alive, showing grainy, rapidly moving
clouds. He rapidly presses buttons and then moves a toggle;
the view on his screen pans, showing the underside of the
ship. The forward landing gear comes into view.

                    EMERSON
          Confirmed; I'm looking at it, and
          it is down.

                              TINEEL
                    Christ on a crapper.

          Image freezes. Background melts in binary script to Medlab.

10   INT. MEDLAB

          TINEEL and EMERSON melt to look like present time. In the
          background, LAKE, PALMER, and BLOOM (in a space suit) are
          lain out on tables. View switches to EMERSON's.

          <pov = EMERSON; time = present; 100%>

                              TINEEL
                    The trick will be to prep the
                    lifeboat without infecting it. So
                    don't turn anything on until we
                    actually separate for launch.

                              EMERSON
                         (off screen/voiceover)
                    Our shuttle does have a cold-launch
                    panic button, so it'll be a bit
                    tricky but still doable.

                              TINEEL
                    Just load air, water, and food;
                    nothing electrical. By the way, it
                    should go without saying that we're
                    leaving them behind...
                         (He indicates the tables
                         behind him holding LAKE and
                         PALMER.)
                    ...It's too dangerous to bring them
                    on board with us.

                              EMERSON
                         (off screen/voiceover)
                    They're demonstrably infected, but
                    they're also self-contained. Still,
                    I don't have a problem with that.
                    BITS is something we definitely
                    don't want to take back with us, in
                    any form.

                              TINEEL
                    Yeah; that would be bad. Rather
                    than take back a sample, we'll just
                    take back a warning to treat it
                    with care. I'm sure
                    electrobiologists would be
                    interested in it, especially since
                              (MORE)

                              TINEEL (cont'd)
                    it's new and unique. I'm sure they
                    could find a way to deal with it.

                              EMERSON
                         (off screen/voiceover)
                    Bullshit in triplicate, boss: this
                    planet needs to be quarantined,
                    just to keep BITS contained. This
                    thing screws up all electrical
                    technology like nothing else, so we
                    can't let it spread back. Besides,
                    from an android's standpoint, this
                    thing's the equivalent of the Black
                    Plague.

Image freezes, swings to 3rd person. Background melts in
binary script to Computer Room 2.

11   INT. COMPUTER ROOM 2 (13 HOURS EARLIER)

          <pov = 3rd person; time = 13 hours earlier; 25%>

          EMERSON and TINEEL melt to be replaced as they were 13 hours
          ago. BLOOM is also present.

          EMERSON and BLOOM contemplate a computer/machine not
          working.

                              TINEEL
                    Something *else* break down?

                              BLOOM
                    Yeah, but nothing major. Gotta say,
                    this is getting frustrating real
                    fast.

                              TINEEL
                    When you're done, see if Lee's
                    finished fixing the freight
                    elevator. Help him if he isn't.
                    He's taking too long by himself.

                              BLOOM
                    Didn't know the elevator was
                    broken; I've been busy with fixing
                    all this other nuisance shit.

          He plays around with the back panel.

                    EMERSON
          There are a lot of things going
          wrong around here all of a sudden.
          Granted, the Moriarty's an older
          ship, but Bloom and Lee usually
          keep on top of things, and I'm not
          about to chalk all this up to
          spontaneous warranty expiration.

BLOOM stops tinkering and nods conspiratorially to EMERSON.

                    BLOOM
          I was wondering if it was just me
          thinking that, so I wasn't going to
          jinx it by bringing it up, but
          yeah, you're right. Something *weird*
          is going on here. Too many things
          are going wrong too quickly... We
          had a saying in the service: once
          is happenstance, twice is
          coincidence...

                    EMERSON
          Three times is enemy action.
          Something is obviously going on.

                    TINEEL
          Yeah; you've got bugs in the
          system.

Scene freezes on EMERSON and TINEEL. Background melts in
binary script to show Computer Room 1, then a character melt
to show EMERSON and TINEEL 7 hours earlier. LEE and LAKE are
also present. View shifts to EMERSON.

12   INT. COMPUTER ROOM 1 (7 HOURS EARLIER)

          <pov = EMERSON; time = 7 hours earlier; 55%>

                    LEE
          When I started checking half an
          hour ago, I'd guess about 1/3 of
          all our systems were malfunctioning
          in some way. Well, the latest
          diagnostic poll shows about *half* of
          all our systems are hit. This shit
          is spreading like a 2 dollar
          hooker.

                    EMERSON
               (off screen/voiceover)
          And you're still not sure what the
          pattern is?

                    LEE
Well it obviously spreads by direct
contact when you plug something in
from the outside, but with all the
interconnected internal shit it's
gotten into, it seems to be a bit
more erratic, or at least
selective. Some systems you'd think
would be down show no sign of it
and are running fine, while others
are down and I have no idea how
they came in contact with it.

                    EMERSON
          (off screen/voiceover)
Well, let me know if I can help.

                    LEE
Sure: keep Tineel out of my way.
He's distractingly hands-on when
he's around.

                    EMERSON
          (off screen/voiceover)
He's updating the incident report,
so he'll be out of your hair for a
good half hour.

                    LEE
How productive to the situation at
hand. Meanwhile, for those of us
doing *real* work... We should start
shutting down things we don't
immediately need, just as a
preventative measure.

                    EMERSON
          (off screen/voiceover)
Good call. It'll save power, too.
You said we were drawing a lot more
juice now. Makes sense, I guess...

                    LAKE
Yeah, and I wonder if that's
because this thing is feeding on
the Power. Electricity's not only
its medium but food; either way,
it's a source for growth.

                    LEE
Well, we got one thing in our
favor: it's not spreading as fast
as it could. Everything in here's
                    (MORE)

                    LEE (cont'd)
          interconnected on a power grid, so
          once it got into that I'd have
          thought it'd hit everything drawing
          power almost simultaneously. It's
          been a couple of hours since we
          really noticed all this shit, and
          in that time it should have spread
          everywhere by now. Hell, a computer
          virus in our mainframe would've
          done so by now, or at least gotten
          a lot farther along that this has.

                    EMERSON
               (off screen/voiceover)
          Well, it's comparatively slow and
          inefficient, but it's still kicking
          our asses.

                    LAKE
          So it's a patient parasite. Slow
          and steady wins the race.

                    LEE
          I have noticed one thing. At first,
          when something was infected, it
          just shut down and after that was
          inoperable. Now when something's
          infected, it shuts down and then
          restarts. After that, it works,
          just not correctly.

                    LAKE
          Jesus, this thing's adapting to its
          environment.

There is an awkward pause, and then the camera looks at
LAKE.

                    EMERSON
               (off screen/voiceover)
          Lake, what are the chances that
          this thing is becoming intelligent?

Image freezes, swings to third person. Image melts in binary
script, to be replaced by MEDLAB from 15 hours earlier.
Binary melt on the crew, removing all except LAKE. LANIER is
added. LAKE is tending to an injured LANIER by wrapping a
bandage around his left hand. She has a kindly, helpful
expression, he seems rather embarrassed.

13   INT. MEDLAB (15 HOURS EARLIER)

<pov = 3rd person, time = 15 hours ago, 15%>

                    LANIER
          It still tingles, but I can't tell
          if that's the torpicane kicking in.

                    LAKE
          Probably a bit of both. You got a
          pretty good zap from that widget.
          All your arm hair was standing on
          end when you came in.

                    LANIER
          And Lee had just fixed the damned
          thing, too.

LAKE finishes wrapping and clips the gauze in place.

                    LAKE
          How's that?

                    LANIER
          Hard to tell with the tingling, but
          seems fine.

                    LAKE
          Good, but let me know if you think
          it's too tight, okay?

                    LANIER
          Sure. I must say, you have an
          excellent bedside manor
          programming.

                    LAKE
          Thank you. Ironically, after they
          bought and bonded me, Lee said he
          found the programming was actually
          too sweet, at least for him, so he
          paid to program me with a sarcasm
          subroutine.

                    LANIER
          I'd never had guessed. So, how's
          that working out?

                    LAKE
          Emerson ignores it, Bloom's fallen
          in love with me, and Lee hates it.
          But I think that has to do with him
          secretly being an androphobe.

LANIER examines his hand, wiggles his fingers.

                    LAKE
          Now, the nerves in your hand are
          still jittery from the shock
          proximity, so give them time to
          calm down. Use that hand as little
          as possible for the next day or so,
          and baby it when you do need to use
          it.

LANIER nods, and grunts understanding.

                    LAKE (CONT)
          This is especially important over
          the next few hours, because with
          the torpicane you're not going to
          feel anything in that hand at all,
          so you won't know your limits.
          After it kicks in, you could break
          your wrist and not even feel it.

                    LANIER
          Good point. I've never had
          torpicane; it's illegal back in the
          core because of the recreational
          abuse. I thought they only used it
          on terminally ill patients to ease
          their pain in their final hours.

                    LAKE
          Well, torpicane *is* an excellent
          anesthetic, and I'm only applying a
          small dose locally. You won't
          become addicted, if that's what
          you're worried about.

                    LANIER
          Kind of surprised you can even get
          it out here on the Rim.

                    LAKE
          Rim rules are more relaxed than in
          the Core. I am a bona fide doctor
          droid, all my paperwork is legit
          and in order, so I can buy it and
          use it at my discretion. As long as
          I do it responsibly, no problem.
          Personally, there are 20 other
          anesthetics available that would do
          as well a job, but Lee insists that
          the Moriarty be stocked with
          nothing but top shelf pharmacy. He
                    (MORE)

>   LAKE (cont'd)
>   even kicks in more than he should
>   to fund our medical expenses, so I
>   turn a blind eye when an occasional
>   tablet or patch goes missing.
>   Still, he gets the best, and we've
>   assembled quite a little apothecary
>   of exotics.

>   LANIER
>   Well, I wish PASE were as generous
>   or flamboyant with its inventory.
>   That widget was old 2 years ago. I
>   asked 'em for a new one, but they
>   said no. Wonder if I'd gotten it,
>   if this would have happened.

He holds up the wounded hand for emphasis, and winces in
pain and confusion.

>   LANIER (CONT)
>   The tingling changed direction when
>   I did that.

>   LAKE
>   That's the torpicane kicking in.

>   LANIER
>   Yeah, it feels different than that
>   original static tingling.

>   LAKE
>   Well, in a few minutes, you won't
>   be feeling anything.

>   LANIER
>   You know, you should probably write
>   me a prescription or affidavit
>   saying you gave me torpicane. PASE
>   drug tests, and are pretty zero
>   tolerant.

>   LAKE
>   I can do that.

>   LANIER
>   Actually, it's my understanding
>   Tineel was the one who got that
>   policy pushed through. He'll
>   certainly want documentation as to
>   why I have a few micrograms of an
>   abusive drug in my system. Tineel
>   would jump on it, and I'd be out of
>   a job.

                    LAKE
          Admittedly, Mr. Tineel does seem
          very strict and stringent about
          following policies. But I'm sure
          the circumstances mitigate...

                    LANIER
          No, I think Tineel has it out for
          me, because He thinks I'm a
          Doubting Thomas.

                    LAKE
          Michelangelo did a painting of
          that, but somehow I don' think
          you're referring to John 20:25.

                    LANIER
          A Doubting Thomas is a PASE
          employee that knows Tineel and his
          history, and doesn't buy his
          version of certain embarrassing
          events; or at least refuses to
          believe him without empirical proof
          to back it up.

                    LAKE
          Oh? Sounds like shop gossip, and
          you just triggered the circuit for
          my sewing circle subroutine.

LANIER looks a bit hesitant, whether he should open up to
LAKE. She flashes him an innocent *your-secret's-safe-with-me*
smile, and wins him over. He makes a point of looking around
to the doorways, to make sure they are alone, then leans
forward conspiratorially. .

                    LANIER
          Alright, before PASE, there was a
          company called Horizon Exploration.
          Did the same thing.

                    LAKE
               (nods in understanding)
          I've heard of them; they went out
          of business three years ago. And,
          actually, Tineel said PASE stared
          three years ago...

It is LANIER's turn to nod.

                    LANIER
          Yep, and this is not a coincidence.
          PASE is basically what rose from
                    (MORE)

                    LANIER (cont'd)
the ashes of the disaster that was
Horizon. This is all before my
time, but back then Tineel was with
Horizon in some high-level
capacity; I'm honestly not sure
how. Anyway, Horizon went belly-up
because one of their sites had a
flash fire; killed everyone in the
complex. The Law stepped in to
investigate, and found so much
wrong that there'd be bankruptcy
for the company and jail time for
some key people. However, Horizon
was able to prove all the problems
were a one-off at that single site,
and the guy in charge, named
Thomas, was to blame. Rather
convenient, 'cuz he died in the
fire. Anyway, a lot of the people
I've met who were around back then
say Tineel actually had a hand in
this, either in the build-up to it
all, or the cover-up blaming
Thomas, or even both. Don't know if
he was covering his ass or the
company's, but the buzz around the
beehive is that he's not clean from
all that.

                    LAKE
Do you believe that?

                    LANIER
Honestly? I don't know. But some of
the old timers I've talked to make
some pretty interesting points
about the whole thing, and they'd
know better than I would. It's no
secret that Tineel isn't popular
among the PASE rank and file. Some
people won't work with him at all.
Lucky me, I got the short straw and
ended up on this run with him.

                    LAKE
Wait, is this your first time
actually working with him, then?

                    LANIER
Yeah. Y'know, interesting side not
to this whole Horizon thing. When
it rose from the ashes with new
                (MORE)

                    LANIER (cont'd)
          backing and a new name as PASE, a
          lot of the Horizon crew came over,
          including Tineel. Whatever his old
          job at Horizon was, it wasn't
          managing explorations like this.

He lets that sink in, but she is quick on the draw.

                    LAKE
          Are you saying that our mission
          commander has no real experience at
          this sort of run?

                    LANIER
          My understanding is he's done two
          survey missions: the first about
          three years ago, the other
          something like nine months ago.
          Both were a wash-out; they didn't
          find anything either time.
          Apparently both runs went smoothly,
          but maybe only because nothing out
          of the ordinary was sprung at him.
          Personally, I don't think he'd know
          how to react if something wasn't in
          the PASE playbook. That's why he
          runs things so rigidly: he's still
          new at this and doesn't know how to
          improvise.

                    LAKE
          He's certainly shown no creativity.
          Or sense of humor.

                    LANIER
          No. He's got a well-deserved
          reputation in that department,
          though my theory is his logic is
          "if I'm not having fun, you're not
          going to either."

                    LAKE
          Well, he may be a harsh taskmaster,
          but perhaps PASE felt that was what
          was needed. Then again, you do all
          the real work, he just
          micro-manages.

                    LANIER
          True, and he doesn't have the
          experience yet to know he's more in
          the way than helpful. I'll tell
                    (MORE)

> LANIER (cont'd)
> you, though, one of the old timer
> grumbles was that Tineel got moved
> to the exploration wing to get him
> out of the way. And if he fucks up
> a mission, they deal with him.
> Unless he fucks up fatally, and
> then problem solved permanently.

> LAKE
> Just like Doubting Thomas.

Scene freezes. Binary flood changes to show LAKE and LANIER
from 30 minutes earlier. TINEEL, LEE, and EMERSON are also
present (PALMER and BLOOM are on tables.) View switches to
LAKE. She is looking at EMERSON.

14   INT. MEDLAB (30 MINUTES EARLIER)

<pov = LAKE, time = 30 minutes earlier, 75%>

NOTE: this is an excerpt of Scene 31. Dialog from that
between TINEEL, EMERSON, and LANIER runs in the background.

> LAKE
> Amen, brother.

Camera turns toward a workspace where an old fashioned
microscope has been set up.

> LAKE
> (voiceover/off screen)
> I specifically dug this out just in
> case: no powered parts.

She carefully sets up, using a wooden tongue depressor as a
slide. The end has a glistening goo on it.

Camera zooms in on the microscope's eyepiece. The view blurs
as the image fine-tunes, finally revealing strange pulsing
shapes. After a moment, there is a click, and the
magnification increases. Another click with the same result.

The view swings up as she addresses the room at large.

> LAKE
> I've never seen anything like this.
> It's not cellular. This BITS may be
> electrical, but it's behaving like
> a biological virus. It infects
> something electrical and tries to
> rewrite the circuitry to something
> habitable, with disastrous results.

Scene freezes, then swings to third person. Binary melt to show Bridge from 9 hours ago. Then binary melt on crew, showing them 9 hours ago.

15   INT. BRIDGE (9 HOURS EARLIER)

<pov = 3rd person; time = 9 hours earlier; 45%>

                    PALMER
          We can't fly with a landing strut
          hanging out.

                    TINEEL
          Bloom, Lee, can one of you go out
          fix it?

                    BLOOM
          I think we'd have to. The problem's
          not something in here; it's out
          there. Worse comes to worse, I
          should be able to retract it
          manually, but if we have to keep
          cranking it by hand every time we
          want to land or take off, it's
          gonna be a pain in the bort.

                    TINEEL
          We'll deal with that when we have
          to.

                    BLOOM
          Fine; Let's do it.

Camera holds on a close-up of BLOOM and LEE. Cut to same close-up, except now they is wearing a space suit; the Bridge is replaced with the Airlock.

16   INT. AIRLOCK (MOMENTS LATER)

                    EMERSON
               (off camera/radio distortion)
          Opening outer doors.

A red light begins swirling overhead. Camera pans back through the parting doors, revealing the side of the hull. His suit has a jet-pack attached; BLOOM uses the controls to propel himself forward. Camera pans to track him.

                    BLOOM
               (radio distortion)
          And I'm out.

LEE exits a moment later, likewise attired. He is pulling a
small dolly that has been firmly fitted with tool
compartments.

>   LEE
>   (radio distortion)
>   Clear.

17   INT. BRIDGE (SIMULTANEOUSLY)

EMERSON sitting at his console, watching BLOOM on the video
monitor. LEE follows behind. EMERSON moves a toggle to
camera-track them.

>   EMERSON
>   Gotcha.

18   EXT. SHIP (SIMULTANEOUSLY)

Camera is following BLOOM. The Planet can be seen in the
background; it is swirling storms with faint, sporadic
lightning. BLOOM makes his way along the underbelly toward
the forward gear. LEE lags behind slightly.

19   INT. BRIDGE (SIMULTANEOUSLY)

EMERSON is watching them on the video screen. Next to the
screen is a schematic of the landing gear.

20   EXT. SHIP (SIMULTANEOUSLY)

BLOOM reaches the landing strut. He lands on it, and
disengages himself from the jetpack. As he begins to climb
up the gear, LEE floats next to the strut, and grabs hold of
it to stop his momentum. The dolly palate floats by; he
grabs it with his free hand to stop it.

>   BLOOM
>   (radio distortion)
>   First things first, there's no
>   power in here. Lee, toss me a
>   flashlight.
>
>   LEE
>   (radio distortion)
>   Coming up on your left.

A bright light comes sailing up next to BLOOM. He reaches
out and grabs the lamp, and then continues to climb up.

> TINEEL
> (over radio)
> Any idea what the problem is?

LEE begins climbing up the side of the ship, carrying a manual hand crank.

> LEE
> (radio distortion)
> Screw it; let's just crank it
> closed. This'll be easier to deal
> with inside, in flight, out of a
> suit.

BLOOM is looking at the mechanics of the gear. He reaches out to some wires, and they crumble to dust at his touch. The powder floats around, quite a bit of it getting on his suit.

> BLOOM
> (radio distortion)
> Shit, it's like this thing's been
> burned. All the wiring's brittle...

The lamp goes out.

Close-up of BLOOM (inside suit). His face is illuminated by a few internal lights, but suddenly these die and the scene goes completely black - his suit has just shut down.

> BLOOM (CONT)
> (flat, echoless, and fatally
> aware)
> Oh shit.

21   INT. BRIDGE (SIMULTANEOUSLY)

LAKE is sitting at a console, monitoring a screen displaying Bloom and Lee's lifesigns and vitals. Bloom's is blank, and a red alarm is flashing: contact lost.

> LAKE
> Bloom?

LANIER looks over, concerned. Image freezes, swings to LANIER's pov.

22   INT. BRIDGE

       <pov = LANIER; time = present; 100%> Bridge melts in binary
       script, replaced by Bridge as it appears in Scene 4. [note:
       camera does not move during this scene; shot from floor
       looking up] LEE is added during the cascade, looking down
       at the camera. He is still holding the pistol, but also has
       a bucket of water.

                         LEE
                 Not sure if you're still human or
                 not, but I just can't take the
                 chance.

       LEE pours the bucket over LANIER's (off-screen) corpse. When
       he is done, he makes a nervous smile, and begins fishing for
       something in his pocket. However, he quickly sees that some
       of LANIER's blood has splattered onto himself. He upends the
       bucket and lets the remains dribble onto the red splashed.

                         LEE
                    (muttering to himself)
                 Can't take the chance.

       Image freezes, swings to third person. Room melts in binary
       script to Bridge from beginning of the story 9 days ago.
       Another binary flood to remove LANIER and add BLOOM, LAKE
       and EMERSON.

23   INT. BRIDGE (9 DAYS AGO)

       <pov - 3rd person; time = 9 days ago; 0%>

       Over the intercom, faint strains of Rossini's *Petite Messe*.
       Paired around the Bridge, EMERSON and LAKE are having one
       conversation, LEE and BLOOM a different one. LAKE is wearing
       a t-shirt with a Degas painting (L'Absinthe) on it; Bloom a
       beat-up wifebeater with a large "certified" stamp over the
       caption: 8" [*ie*: eight inches.] LEE is smoking a cigarette
       by a smokeless ashtray; his grimy black t-shirt has a
       laudanum bottle with the label "Old Bull".

       On a console near EMERSON is a video display of the
       airlock's exterior and the flight hanger; TINEEL, LANIER and
       PALMER can be seen walking into it. They stop, and TINEEL
       looks around expectantly.

                         EMERSON
                 Incoming.

       EMERSON keys the intercom; the Rossini mutes in half.

                    EMERSON
          Welcome aboard the Dean Moriarty.
          We're all on the Bridge.

On the screen, TINEEL looks around, sees the video, and nods
curtly to it. They walk off screen.

EMERSON presses a button, and the video jumps to the Cargo
Room; TINEEL, LANIER, and PALMER walk through it briefly. He
stands up, quick-smooths his appearance.

                    LEE
          About time. Let's tell 'em no and
          then I can get back to my nap.

                    BLOOM
          Nah; let's at least hear 'em out
          first before we say no.

                    LEE
          What company are they from again?

                    EMERSON
          PASE. Pan-Astral Survey
          Exploration.

Blank stares from his comrades.

                    EMERSON
          I'd never heard of them either.
          Small company; they've been around
          three years.

                    LEE
          You think they're legit, though?

                    EMERSON
          Appears to be. They've filed two
          claims in the past two years, and
          sold both at a profit, so they
          should have the money to fund us.

                    LEE
          A solid million isn't all *that*
          much, corporate-wise.

                    BLOOM
          Yeah, but it's cheaper for small
          comps to subcontract assholes like
          us rather than risk their own
          ships.

                    LEE
          (points an accusatory finger)
     Yeah, and that's...

                    EMERSON
     Lee, it's more that we've made all
     year doing freelance cargo hauling.

                    LEE
     It *is*, and don't get me wrong: I'm
     as greedy as the next one o' y'all.
     But Bloom's got the point about
     them not wanting to use their own
     ships for this. Either they're not
     quite sure what the flight path is,
     or they're not sure what's *really*
     out there. Either way, sounds like
     they want us to make a risk jump. I
     hate risk jumping. We've done it
     before, of course, and it's shaved
     years of my life. If your luck runs
     out at ultra-light, then it doesn't
     matter what you've been paid
     because the dead can't spend.

                    EMERSON
     Give me credit, Lee; that was one
     of my first questions. It's not
     exactly risk jumping, because they
     already tested the flight path
     algorithm with an unmanned drone.
     As long as we follow the path there
     and back exactly, we're fine.

                    LAKE
     Lee, if Emerson trusts the flight
     path, I'd defer to him. He's the
     one taking the risks. All you need
     do is just stay out of the way,
     unless something goes wrong and we
     actually need you.

                    BLOOM
     Yeah, dude; pretty sweet deal we
     got. Just like in ancient China,
     where people used to pay the
     doctors when they were healthy, but
     operations and stuff were free.

                    LAKE
     Oh, like you all do with me right
     now?

                         BLOOM
                    (to LAKE)
               Exactly!
                    (To LEE)
               So just make sure everything works,
               and kick back and watch porn for a
               month. I know that's what I'm gonna
               do, unless Lake here has a change
               of heart.

BLOOM blows her an overly-dramatic kiss.

                         LAKE
               I'm an android: I don't have a
               heart. Or a vagina. So enjoy your
               porn.

She returns the mock kiss.

                         BLOOM
                    (to LEE)
               I'm wearing her down. She'll be
               mine; you'll see.

LEE smiles politely and nods in mock agreement, though there
is a bit of revulsion in it, too. He seems about to comment
to this effect when he hears footfalls coming from the
access corridor. TINEEL, LANIER, and PALMER enter the
Bridge.

                         TINEEL
               Emerson.

He shakes his hand formally.

                         EMERSON
               Mr. Tineel, this is Lake, Bloom,
               and Lee.

He indicates each in order.

                         TINEEL
                    (mechanically looking at each)
               Lake, Bloom, and Lee.
                    (He indicates his two
                    companions)
               This is Lanier and Palmer.

                         LANIER
               Howdy.

PALMER merely nods, and stands unobtrusively in the back.

LEE takes a deep drag off his cigarette and exhales in the
general vicinity of the ashtray. Little of the smoke is
sucked into it. There is a slightly awkward pause.

                    TINEEL
               (addressing BLOOM, LEE, and
               LAKE)
          I don't know how much Emerson has
          briefed you all, but we represent a
          company called PASE. We would like
          to hire your ship to take us out to
          a newly-charted solar system. There
          are four planets; two rocks, and
          two gas giants. Take us to each,
          and let Lanier here do an analysis
          of anything interesting.

                    LANIER
          Now, I know your ship's not
          equipped for a proper survey, but
          I've got some gadgets that can do
          the job.

                    TINEEL
          Palmer here has the flight
          coordinates programmed into him,
          and will plug in as the actual
          pilot.

                    PALMER
          It's a clean path. Eight days there
          at ultra-light.

                    LEE
          You're sure it's clean? My
          understanding is, you only tested
          it once. Normally, Emerson's our
          pilot; mind if he double-checks
          your figures?

                    TINEEL
               (visibly bristles)
          Actually... The flight path is
          proprietary information, and PASE's
          stake in this is still in it's
          infancy, so I'd prefer to keep that
          confidential for now.
               (to EMERSON)
          Don't worry: I'll share it with you
          if there's a real need to know.

Off to the side, LEE snorts derisively, and coughs the words
"risk jump." Everyone ignores him.

                    LAKE
          What system is it, anyway? Or is
          that proprietary information, too?

PALMER and TINEEL answer at once, differently; PALMER defers
to TINEEL.

                    TINEEL
          It's in the right wing of the
          Jabberwocky.

                    BLOOM
          Heard the name, but couldn't tell
          you where it is. Dude, we're Rim
          Rats. I have no idea what
          constellations are what towards the
          core where you're from.

                    EMERSON
          That's okay, Bloom; I got it. If
          you're on Tarshish, it's one of
          several seen from the southern
          hemisphere, probably off toward...

                    LEE
               (increasingly irritated at the
               vagueness)
          Does this place have a *name*?

                    TINEEL
          The star itself has a big, long
          catalog number.

Next to him, LANIER holds his hands a foot apart, nodding
solemnly.

                    BLOOM
          So if it doesn't have a name, how
          about if we find anything
          worthwhile out there we call it
          Bloom's Star. I'll take that as my
          bonus cut.

                    LANIER
               (laughs)
          Actually, PASE hasn't filed an
          actual claim on the system yet. We
          were the first ones there, with a
          probe. We registered the flight
          path the probe took there and back;
          but that's it. Like Tineel said,
          this whole project is still in its
          infancy. If there's anything
                    (MORE)

                    LANIER (cont'd)
worthwhile out there, PASE will
stake the system, and it'll stop
being a big, long catalog number
and start being PASE 3 or
something.

                    TINEEL
We're just going out to see if it's
worth it for PASE to buy the system
and then sell it to someone who can
actually develop it.

                    LEE
Just so we're clear, we'd get paid
even if you don't find anything?

                    TINEEL
Correct, though PASE takes a bath
financially.

                    EMERSON
But you did say that there would be
a bonus proportionate to what you
find?

                    TINEEL
Yes, you get the flat fee we agreed
upon, adjusted accordingly with
what Lanier can find.

                    LANIER
Basically, PASE'll toss on a tip,
depending on what's out there.

                    EMERSON
So what do you think the total time
will be?

                    PALMER
Eight days there, eight days back,
four planets at a day apiece plus
travel time...

                    LANIER
Longer if we find anything.
Actually, the two gas giants will
probably take longer if they have a
lot of moons.

                    PALMER
Of course, but a minimum of twenty
days out.

                    EMERSON
          As I explained, with this many
          air-breathers, we can probably do
          about 30 days out.

                    LANIER
          And hopefully we'll use them all. I
          mean, that we're lucky and there's
          something good out there worth
          taking the extra time to
          investigate. Could be a solid gold
          moon for all we know.

                    LEE
          Yeah, but there could be big,
          bad-ass bug-eyed monsters out
          there, too.

                    LANIER
               (slight chuckle)
          Nah; if there were, they would've
          eaten the probe PASE pitched out
          there.

                    TINEEL
          Any other questions?

Shrugs and silence.

                    TINEEL
          Good; I just have one question for
          you. It will take us a short while
          to load Lanier's widgets on board,
          and probably you the same to rig
          for ultra-light. I would like to
          leave as soon as possible, as in,
          "an hour after *immediately*." Is
          that a problem?

EMERSON glance-checks with his crewmates.

                    BLOOM
          Aw, man! I had plans to go play the
          dollar slut machines over at Club
          Rakdos tonight.

                    LEE
               (to BLOOM)
          I guess it's a good thing I just
          saw my optometrist.

                    EMERSON
               (to TINEEL)
          Shouldn't be a problem.

                    TINEEL
          Good. PASE feels time is of the
          essence, lest we dawdle and
          discover claim-jumpers have beaten
          us to something choice.

Quick cut to LEE leaning over to BLOOM.

                    LEE
               (low, conspiratorial voice of
               incredulity)
          "...lest we dawdle..."???

The two start chuckling briefly. TINEEL is aware of it but
deigns to ignore it.

                    TINEEL
          So, Emerson; is this deal
          acceptable?

                    EMERSON
          I'm in, but this ship's a co-owned
          democracy, so we vote.

He turns to LEE, BLOOM, and LAKE.

                    LAKE
          Okay.

                    BLOOM
          I always wanted to take a paid
          vacation to the planets of the PACE
          3 system.

                    LANIER
          Bloom's Star, if we're lucky.

LEE clearly isn't convinced, but shrugs his grudging assent.

                    EMERSON
          Okay then; we'll do it.

                    LANIER
          What do you do if there's a tie?

                    EMERSON, LAKE, BLOOM, AND LEE
               (in chorus)
          Don't ask.

                    TINEEL
          Very well then. Now I realize that
          the Moriarty is a sovereign ship,
          with an independent crew that is
          democracy in action. However, since
          PASE is paying for this and I am in
          charge of the mission itself, I
          must insist that some reasonable
          yet practical PASE standards be
          observed to help us complete this
          to our satisfaction. First order of
          business, no smoking aboard this
          ship.

He looks directly at LEE.

                    LEE
          Smokeless ashtray.

                    TINEEL
          And I can smell it right now. As
          Emerson said, we will have about
          thirty days of breathable air.
          Please do not pollute it.

                    LEE
               (under his breath)
          Yes Sir.

Not taking his eyes off TINEEL, he stubs the butt out,
badly.

                    TINEEL
          Good. Now you and Bloom go down to
          the loading dock and help Lanier
          lug his equipment aboard. Like I
          said, I want to get underway as
          fast as possible.

BLOOM gets up to go help, LEE is much more slow to rise.

                    LAKE
          I can help.

                    LANIER
          Sure; thanks. There's a lot of
          stuff, and half of it's redundant,
          but better safe than sorry. Let me
          go get the inventory chit...

LANIER walks off the Bridge.

                    EMERSON
          There are still a couple minor
          things I'd like to discuss...

He gets into (improvised) conversation with TINEEL and
PALMER. It is full of technical jargon, such as "flight
window" and "space corridor."

                    BLOOM
               (to LAKE as she walks by)
          Hey, I thought you said I was gonna
          get to sit on my ass and watch porn
          this whole job. I have to lug cargo
          now?

                    LAKE
          I'm sure the bucket's still spongy
          from your last film fest, so
          this'll help give it time to dry.
          So come schlep some gear. I'll even
          help with the heavy lifting, so you
          won't strain your arm.

They reach LEE, who slows their walk out.

                    LEE
               (in a low voice and nodding at
               TINEEL)
          Sooooo, what do you think?

                    BLOOM
          I dunno, kinda sounds like a risk
          jump, but if it's a safe path...

                    LEE
          No, I meant our new overlord.

The three stop walking. BLOOM looks over his shoulder at
TINEEL, then shrugs.

                    BLOOM
          Whatever. Seems to have a bit of a
          weed up his butt, but so what.
          Corporate type. Seen worse... but
          that was in the service. Actually,
          he kinda reminds me of this one
          sergeant I had in the Martian
          Militia. Still, it's only a month
          at most, and then we probably never
          see him again.

                    LAKE
          You can make it a month without
          smoking, Lee. And of course as this
          ship's medical officer I recommend
          you quit anyway.

                    BLOOM
          Yeah, you can lay off these...
               (He taps the pack in LEE's
               shirt pocket)
          ...and you might even want to cut
          back on this, too.
               (He taps the liquid eye
               dropper next to the pack.)

                    LAKE
          That's another medical
          recommendation that I make.

                    LEE
               (taps his pack of cigarettes)
          First off, if I go cold turkey and
          Tineel wants to spar with me when
          I'm a week into a nicotine fit,
          I'll rip his cock off and smoke
          that in my pipe. Second...
               (he taps the vial)
          We're not in a quad where this is
          illegal, so I'm fine. Besides, this
          is gonna be a long flight. You got
          your bucket of porn, I have liquid
          silver. Third...
               (he points to TINEEL)
          ...you're missing my whole point.

                    LAKE
          Whatever your point is, you two
          settle it. I'm going to make myself
          useful and load cargo.

She starts to leave, but LEE holds up his hand.

                    LEE
          Actually, Lake, you're the perfect
          one to settle this.

LEE nods at TINEEL. The three observe TINEEL, who is
standing silently and expressionlessly listening to PALMER
discuss calculus with EMERSON.

                    LEE
          I dunno, but my 'bot-'dar is going
          off.

                         (Turns to LAKE)
               He one of you?

                         LAKE
                         (considers this a moment)
               Palmer is, of course, especially if
               he's a light pilot.

                         BLOOM
               PASE probably owns him outright,
               and he isn't even getting paid for
               this, unless it counts toward his
               freedom.

                         LEE
                         (irritably)
               Yeah, but Tineel...

                         LAKE
               I don't know. Can't tell without a
               physical examination, and I've only
               known him five minutes. Why, you
               have a problem if he's a 'droid?

                         LEE
               No, just...
                         (a sour expression of distaste
                         comes over his face)
               ...Just trying to figure out why I
               don't like him.

LEE immediately realizes he has just put his foot in his
mouth, and is apologetic.

                         LEE (CONT)
               I'm sorry, that came out wrong. You
               know I have no real probs with you
               and Emerson. 'Specially after all
               this time.

                         LAKE
               That's okay, I know what you meant.
               Besides, I can't be offended.
               That's why I put up with this
               idiot's advances.

She indicates BLOOM, who promptly puts his arm around her
and grins lustily.

                         BLOOM
               I am Don Juan Quixote, you are my
               windmill.

                         LAKE
              Honoré Daumier did a nice painting
              of that.

She disengages from BLOOM and begins her exit.

                         LAKE
              Come on, let's make ourselves
              useful.

Belatedly, BLOOM follows.

                         BLOOM
              I got a use for ya, plus some
              modifications I can install on
              you...

LEE is left alone at the other end of the BRIDGE, still
staring at TINEEL. TINEEL has not moved at all, except to
nod when asked a question. LEE notices that TINEEL is
looking at him. LEE continues to stare back. Image freezes,
Bridge melts in binary script, replaced by Bridge in present
time. View swings to LEE's pov.

24   INT. BRIDGE

        <pov = LEE; time = five minutes before Scene 1; 95%>

        Note: this (and the next scene) should have a slight
        silvery/monochromatic tint to it, with slight silvery light
        trails, etc.

                         LEE
                    (off camera/voiceover)
              Yeah, I knew it. Androids. They all
              are.

        Camera looks around, and then makes his way through several
        corridors to BLOOM's Room.

25   INT. BLOOM'S ROOM (CONTINUOUS)

        The room is a mess, as much because of BITS as by Bloom's
        semi-slovenly lifestyle. By the bunk is a video screen and a
        bucket full of credit cards that have phallic symbols and
        lurid titles embossed on them. Camera goes to the bunk and
        pulls out a military-style trunk locker from beneath;
        "BLOOM, E." in army font spraypainted atop it. Opening it,
        we see LEE's hands rifle through Bloom's paraphernalia until
        he finds a pistol: something similar to a 20th century
        automatic. LEE checks the clip; fully loaded. Jittery hands
        jack the slide back with a loud, ominous click.

Camera turns to the Bucket of Porn, quickly glimpsing a
plethora of titles like "Motherfoxers", "Queen of the
Carpet", "Venus di Mylar", "Alpha Centari Anal Spinners",
"Did I mention I'm HUGE?", "Black Holes", "Androidgenous",
etc. A case has been pulled out and leans against the video
display; it is labeled "Attack of the Sapphic Vamps!
starring Mandarin Bing and Tawny Baud."

Camera stops on the video display unit. The power light is
pulsing on/off randomly. On the screen, the negative image
of a petite orange-haired Asian woman and a buxom blonde
(both with vampire fangs and twin bite-marks on their
jugulars) writhe in a kiss; the picture plays forward three
seconds, then reverses, and then begins again.

                    LEE
               (off screen/voiceover)
          Hello, BITS.
               (Raises gun to screen)
          Goodbye, BITS.

Pistol fires; screen shatters, and the image dies in sparks.
View moves over to the door as if to exit, then notices a
small wall clock. The time is randomly flashing ones and
zeros. There is a slow zoom on the clock.

                    LEE
               (off screen/voiceover)
          I don't know what the hell you are,
          but you and your extensions will
          not get me.

The clock sequence flashes all zeros for one instant, and
then goes back to a random pattern.

                    LEE (CONT)
               (off screen/voiceover)
          I'm outta here. You're not. None of
          you are.

Scene freezes, background melts in binary script; the clock
now shows actual time and is working (6:10:05 with the
seconds counter increasing correctly.) View swings to third
person view of Computer Room 2, 8 hours earlier.

LEE melts to as he was 8 hours ago. LANIER, EMERSON and LAKE
are also present.

26   INT. COMPUTER ROOM 2 (8 HOURS EARLIER)

<pov - 3rd person; time = 8 hours earlier; 50%>

LEE, wearing rubber gloves, has a small calculator-sized
computer; the display is flashing binary gibberish.

                    LEE
          Now, this unit is infected by
          BITS...

                    LANIER
          BITS?

                    LEE
          Bugs In The System.

LANIER nods understanding. LEE flips the device over and
opens the back with a small screwdriver tool. The wiring is
brittle; he rakes the tip of the screwdriver over the
wiring, and it crumbles to dust.

                    EMERSON
          Damn; it fried the whole thing.

LEE flips the device over; it is still flashing binary.

                    LEE
          Yeah, whatever this is, is too much
          for the circuitry. Crazy thing is,
          even without all the wiring,
          conduits, and such, it still has
          power...

LEE reaches over and picks up a beaker full of water.

                    LEE (CONT)
          ...So, let's try this.

He empties the beaker over the back, soaking the device.
After a few moments, he flips it over. Water, sludgy from
the brittle dust, pours out onto the table. On the display,
the screen is blank.

                    EMERSON
          Nice: you shorted it out.

                    LAKE
          Kind of like Chemotherapy, except
          it kills the host as well as the
          parasite.

                    LEE
          Let's make sure.

He takes a small credit-card and slots it into the machine,
waits a second, and then pulls it out. He then slots it into
another identical machine sitting on the desk. The display
on that says "Ready."

                    LEE
          Looks like that worked, because
          otherwise this would have shut
          down, then restarted with binary.

                    LAKE
          Crude but effective. Unfortunately,
          it's impractical, because we only
          have a finite supply of water on
          board. We'd have to flood the whole
          ship to make sure we got
          everything.

                    LANIER
          Well, two of the planets out here
          are gas giants. One of them might
          have a moon with enough ice...

                    EMERSON
          "*Might*?"

                    LANIER
               (shrugs sheepishly)
          That crinkling sound you hear is me
          clutching at straws. It is
          possible, though.

                    LEE
          Even if you found a moon that's a
          solid ice ball and managed to melt
          a pool large enough to sink the
          ship in it -- which is pretty much
          what you'd have to do here to make
          sure you cleansed everything -- it
          would crap out every system on
          board. Remember: the cure kills the
          patient, too. So I'd have to fix or
          replace everything, which would be
          difficult enough under the best of
          circumstances, but out here...?

                    LAKE
          He's right: there has to be a
          better way.

                    LANIER
          Agreed, but in the meantime, we
          have a short-term cure.

He reaches over to pick up the beaker with his
still-bandaged hand, but numbly fumbles and drops it. Slow
camera slightly as it falls to the floor (taking slightly
longer than normally it should to hit and bounce.)

                    LANIER
               (sheepishly, to LAKE)
          Oops... it's the torpicane, I still
          can't quite...

                    LAKE
          Do that again.

                    LANIER
          What, display my impaired
          dexterity?

The beaker has rolled onto the floor about half-way to LAKE
anyway, so she reaches down and picks it up. She holds it
six feet up, then lets go. The beaker falls, again with a
hint of slo-mo. Her eyes follow it down, concentrating
intently. It hits and bounces.

                    LAKE
          Well, gentlemen, it seems we can
          add gravity control to our list of
          infected systems. This is six feet,
          so assuming terminal velocity of 32
          feet-per-second at normal grav, the
          time it took that beaker to fall
          would put us at, oh, 88% of normal.

                    LEE
          Certainly possible. I can check
          next time I'm on the bridge. At
          least it's dropping, not rising.
          Too much gravity, and it'd be a
          bitch to even move around.

LANIER looks at LAKE curiously.

                    LANIER
          Um, I don't know if this all is a
          coincidence or not, but the gravity
          on that planet was 88.

Scene freezes, rotates to LAKE's pov. Background melts in
binary script to a black screen.

27   **<POV - LAKE; TIME = PRESENT>**

[A new binary script superimposes over the old for about 10
seconds. This binary font/type/size should be different than
the one used to fade between scenes so that they can be
distinguished.] After 10 seconds "normal" binary script
resumes, and melts to show Medlab.

View shifts out to show LAKE 3rd person. Another binary melt
to show LAKE and Medlab as they appeared 1 hour ago. BLOOM,
still in his suit, is on an examination table.

28   INT. MEDLAB (1 HOUR EARLIER)

<pov - 3rd person; time = 1 hour earlier; 55%>

LAKE at a station in MEDLAB, a BITS-infected display unit
before her. Next to her is an uninfected unit, which she is
rapidly entering 1's and 0's onto the display (in match of
the infected unit.) She fills the screen, and hits Enter.
The screen clears.

Quick close-up of display:

        Working...
                (...after a moment...)

        No matches found. Probability pattern is random: 90%

Despite the impassive android face, there is a sense of
frustration in her.

A desk lamp begins to strobe. LAKE looks at it in
irritation, then her expression changes to curiosity. She
clears the screen and begins adding 1s and 0s again,
matching the on/off pattern. She does this for about 10
seconds [quick montage of light/screen/LAKE's fingers to
suggest that the time period is longer] and then hits Enter
again.

Quick close-up of display:

        Working...
                (...after a moment...)

        No matches found. Probability pattern is random: 90%

LAKE allows her disappointment to show.

                    LAKE
          Damn.

LAKE gets up from the station and goes to another work area. She activates a medical machine which suddenly shuts down, restarts, and essentially attacks her. She escapes out of its reach, just barely. She quickly goes over to a sink, fills a beaker full of water, and hesitantly approaches the malfunctioning machine. Deftly, she pours water on it, and the device dies. Silent survey of the scene, then she reaches for a tool, thinks better of it, and exits.

Cut to LAKE entering Bridge.

29   INT. BRIDGE (CONTINUOUS)

TINEEL, EMERSON, and LEE are in a heated debate.

> TINEEL
> All I want to know is, can you fix the gear?

> LEE
> Honestly? I don't know, but I actually doubt it. I'd have to look at it, but...

> TINEEL
> As near as I can tell, we're air-tight, so opening the landing bay from the inside shouldn't be a problem.

> LEE
> That's not the point. Look around you: enough things are going wrong, we need to seriously rethink this whole thing.

> EMERSON
> I'm inclined to agree.

> TINEEL
> It's not your decision.

> LEE
> So who else has to die before it is?

TINEEL takes a deep breath, lets it out melodramatically. Realizing he is facing a potential mutiny, he looks over at PALMER. PALMER stares back passively. He looks at LANIER, who shakes his head negatively. He looks back at PALMER.

                    TINEEL
          I assume we can still fly?

                    PALMER
          I believe so.

                    LEE
               (under his breath)
          Oh, that's reassuring.

Pregnant pause.

                    TINEEL
          Plot a course for Tarshish. Let's
          get out of here before something
          critical goes wrong.

                    EMERSON
          Thank you.

                    LEE
          Let me re-check that we're strapped
          down and rigged for it. Gimme a
          minute.

LEE exits.

PALMER plays around with his console. Quick cut of the
screen, showing an astral map with a flight course across
it. Another screen is full of complex mathematical formulas.

                    PALMER
          Done. Should take 8 days, 5 hours,
          and 23 minutes.

                    TINEEL
          Let's get to it, then; sooner the
          better.

PALMER activates some controls, and a headrest rises from
the back of his seat. He leans back into it, and there are
soft clicking sounds as he physically interfaces into it.
Close-up as his hand reaches over to a bank of switches. The
first is marked ULTRALIGHT: PRIME; He flips it. PALMER
jerks, goes limp, then goes spastic for one horrifying
moment. Then his head seems to explode internally, and a
glistening, gelatinous green goo pours out of his eyes and
mouth. LANIER rushes over as if to restrain him, but PALMER
has already gone limp. Carefully avoiding the glistening
goo, LANIER manages to disengage PALMER's head from the
chair.

Cut to TINEEL, watching passively. Scene freezes, swings to TINEEL's pov. The Bridge melts in binary script to show Medlab at present.

30   INT. MEDLAB

\<pov = TINEEL; time = present; 100%\>

                    EMERSON
          I should point out that it's all
          but inevitable that I will become
          infected at some time, if not
          already.

                    TINEEL
              (off camera/voiceover)
          I think you'd know if you were.

                    EMERSON
          Hopefully, but who's to say? I've
          been running a diagnostic on myself
          every 30 seconds, but how do I know
          my diagnostic isn't infected and
          giving false readings?

                    TINEEL
              (off camera/voiceover)
          I think I'd notice if you were
          malfunctioning. And I can't become
          infected, so I'm a neutral opinion.

                    EMERSON
          Strictly speaking, Tineel, how do
          we know you humans can't somehow
          become infected too? After all, the
          brain is essentially electrical.

Scene freezes. Swings to third person. Binary flood changes Medlab to a half hour ago. BLOOM is on a table. Then EMERSON and TINEEL melt to show them 2 hours ago. LAKE, LANIER and LEE are also present, the latter two carrying PALMER by the arms and legs. Both are wearing thick rubber gloves.

31   INT. MEDLAB (30 MINUTES EARLIER)

\<pov = 3rd person; time = 30 minutes earlier; 75%\>

LANIER and LEE put PALMER on an examination table opposite BLOOM. Robotic fluids are oozing out of every orifice on PALMER's head. Standing safely to the side, LAKE notices that the faint glistening in the fluid is slowly strobing.

As she watches, the glistening grows in the fluid. LAKE
takes a tongue depressor and scoops up a sample.

                    EMERSON
          Careful!

                    LAKE
          Wood doesn't conduct; I should be
          okay.

She holds the sample up for all to see.

                    LEE
          It's BITS.

                    LAKE
          Palmer's servo-fluid seems to be a
          decent agar for it. I haven't been
          able to observe BITS directly yet.
          Let me see what I can find out.

She goes over to a workstation with an old-fashioned
microscope on it.

                    EMERSON
          See if you can find out a way to
          kill it.

                    LAKE
              (quick pause to directly
               acknowledge him)
          Amen, brother.

She carefully sets up, using the depressor as a slide.

                    LAKE
              (more to herself than anyone)
          I specifically dug this out just in
          case: no powered parts.

LEE loses interest, and goes over to BLOOM. TINEEL sidles
over to EMERSON and LANIER.

                    TINEEL
          So how did we get this thing?
          Something the rover brought back?

                    LANIER
          No; rover came back fine; it didn't
          get infected 'till Bloom and I
          started prepping it for the next
          run.

                    EMERSON
               (nodding concurrent)
          Things were going wrong long before
          rover returned. The atmosphere was
          very electrical, but the Moriarty
          didn't take any direct lightning
          strikes. If you want a guess, the
          front landing gear must have come
          down on a clump of it. I'll bet
          that was actually the first
          malfunction we had, but we just
          didn't know it.

                    TINEEL
          Just wondering how to put this in
          the report.

EMERSON gives him a harsh look.

LAKE looks up from the microscope and addresses the room.

                    LAKE
          I've never seen anything like this.
          It's not cellular. This BITS may be
          electrical, but it's behaving like
          a biological virus. It infects
          something electrical and tries to
          rewrite the circuitry to something
          habitable, with disastrous results.

                    TINEEL
          We already guessed that. Let me
          know when you have something fresh
          to tell us.

LAKE returns her attention to the microscope.

                    LAKE
          For every six that flash off, nine
          new ones flash on. I'm not sure if
          it's growing or breeding.

The rest of the room ignores her.

                    LEE
               (looks at BLOOM)
          Sorry I couldn't reach you in time.

His lip quivers, and a slightly silver tear forms in an eye.
EMERSON walks over to him.

                    EMERSON
          Bloom was a good guy. I never had a
          problem with him. You knew him
          longer than me, of course.

                    LEE
          Eight years, even before we pitched
          in to buy the Moriarty. I know you
          and LAKE have a stake in her, too,
          but I still think of this as his
          and my ship originally. Gonna be
          pissed if we lose it.
                    (he slyly indicates TINEEL and
                    lowers his voice)
          I somehow PASE ain't gonna pay us
          for a new ship, because I have a
          rather low opinion of them in
          general and their middle management
          in particular.

There is a short, awkward silence. Very softly, EMERSON
begins humming part of the Overture to Rossini's
'Semiraminde.'

                    LEE (CONT.)
          So tell me, how do you think this
          jackass is handling this?

                    EMERSON
                    (shrugs and stops humming)
          Seems pretty cool under pressure. I
          don't hold him responsible for
          Bloom and Palmer.
                    (Lowers voice)
          I am curious to see what he does to
          help get our asses out of this.

                    LEE
          ...'cool under pressure'... I don't
          know him, I don't like him, and I
          don't know if I want him manually
          flying this thing at beyond-light
          speed.

                    EMERSON
          Well, I only know how to fly if I'm
          plugged in, and that's obviously
          not an option. If we're going home,
          we're stuck with him.

LAKE looks up from the microscope.

                    LAKE
          I have never seen anything like
          this. You would probably consider
          the flash patterns pretty. Would
          you care to look?

                    TINEEL
          No thanks. Just see if you can
          neutralize it.

He walks over to LEE and EMERSON, but LANIER steps up to the
microscope quickly.

                    LANIER
          I'd like to see.

                    TINEEL
              (to EMERSON and LEE)
          Normally I would just fly us on
          manual, but I do not want to have
          the engines become a BITS casualty
          half way through the flight. The
          course Palmer plotted is now
          scrambled with ones and zeros, so
          I'll have to redo it. Lee, go take
          the nav-lan off-line and prep for
          manual. Emerson, find out what our
          complete system status is: what
          works, what doesn't. Lanier can
          help you. I'll go break out the
          star charts and see if I can
          manually plot a jump back home to
          Tarshish...

LEE starts to leave.

                    TINEEL (CONT)
          ...And don't worry, Lee: this
          jackass is an adequate manual pilot
          at beyond-light speed.

LEE stops and stares at him, but TINEEL's face is
surprisingly calm.

                    LEE
          Excuse me; duty calls.

He gives a dry wink and exits, already fishing the bottle of
silver liquid from his pocket. LANIER walks over.

In the background, LAKE is now bending over PALMER's body.
She is doing something to the face, though it is unclear
what.

                    LAKE
          Let's see how it likes this...
          shit!

LAKE jerks back suddenly, and promptly falls to the floor.
She restarts (with a shiver) and shuts down again. The
others stare in silent horror. After an awkward moment,
LANIER picks up LAKE by the ankles and looks at TINEEL.

                    LANIER
          Give me a hand?

Somewhat reluctantly, TINEEL grabs her wrists, and they lift
her up and walk her over to a vacant table. LANIER does so
awkwardly, favoring his bandaged hand.

                    EMERSON
          No; put her on that one.

He indicates a different examination table; on the wall over
the pillow is a lithograph of Monet's "Bridge over a pool of
Water Lilies." LANIER looks at him questioningly.

                    EMERSON (CONT.)
          That was her favorite painting.

LANIER nods, and changes direction. They lay her out under
the lithograph. LANIER crosses her arms over her breasts;
she stares out emptily. They then return to Emerson.

                    LANIER
          This attrition rate sucks big
          greasy donkey balls.

                    TINEEL
          Agreed. Lanier, go to the bridge
          and hit the S.O.S. distress. I
          don't know if it's still working,
          but worth a shot.

                    LANIER
          On it.

                    EMERSON
          There's an option to also transmit
          a quarantine warning. I don't know
          if this is really a bio-hazard, but
          we're definitely contagious, and I
          think any rescue team would
          appreciate the warning.

LANIER nods both understanding and agreement; he leaves
Medlab.

>   TINEEL
> You know as well as I do it'll take
> eight days for us to get back.
> Think the engine can hold out that
> long?

>   EMERSON
> We can't be guaranteed it'll work
> now.

>   TINEEL
> If the S.O.S. distress works, it
> will still take eight days to reach
> Tarshish, and any rescue would be
> eight days after that. That's
> minimum; otherwise it's probably
> about a month before PASE notices
> we're overdue.

>   EMERSON
> BITS infection is growing on a
> j-curve, so no way this ship will
> last that long.

>   TINEEL
> Then neither will we.

Image freezes. Medlab melts in binary script, to show it at present. View swings to EMERSON's pov. TINEEL melts slightly, showing him at present.

32   INT. MEDLAB   (ABOUT 10 MINUTES LATER.)

<pov - EMERSON; time = present; 100%>

>   TINEEL
> I think the most frustrating thing
> about this is that BITS is just
> some lowly natural thing.

>   EMERSON
>   (off camera/voiceover)
> What do you mean?

>   TINEEL
> Well, if you're going to be
> defeated, you want it to at least
> be from some worthy adversary. Your
> arch-enemy, the man in the high
> castle, should ideally be some
> super-intelligent, super-powerful
> force that has some sort of master
> plan for world domination.

                         EMERSON
                    (off camera/voiceover)
               I think I see what you're saying.
               You're incensed that we're losing
               to what you consider to be a lesser
               entity.

                         TINEEL
               Exactly! BITS probably isn't even
               self-aware, and doesn't realize the
               havoc it's creating. It's just
               doing its own thing. And I don't
               want to lose to something like
               that.

                         EMERSON
                    (off camera/voiceover)
               Well, we haven't lost yet; we still
               have 10 to 15 hours to try to turn
               the tables and beat this thing...

EMERSON is interrupted by noises (running, etc.) from the
entrance corridor. He stops talking and looks over looks
over in time to see LEE run into Medlab, covered in LANIER's
blood and brandishing Bloom's gun.

Confrontation with TINEEL and EMERSON begins as LEE fires
his pistol at TINEEL.

Image freezes, swings to third person. EMERSON and TINEEL
dissolve in binary, and LEE melts to how he was 6 hours ago.
Background melts in binary script to Computer Room #1.

33   INT. COMPUTER ROOM 1 (6 HOURS EARLIER)

<pov - 3rd person; time = 6 hours earlier; 30%>

LEE is sitting at a worktable, resuming work on fixing
Lanier's malfunctioning widget. He pulls out his eyedropper
kit and unscrews the top, but then the widget sparks
violently. LEE is startled and drops the vial and the
dropper right on top of the open circuitry of the widget.

                         LEE
               Oh shit!

Cut to close-up of the vial. Silvery liquid is pouring out
in a steady stream onto the circuit board. There is another
spark, and a quick flurry of electrical glistenings in the
liquid. The pool grows to touch the tip of the eyedropper.
By now LEE is on top of things and quickly picks up the
vial. There is another spark from the machine, and a pulse

of glistening in the remaining pool and the glass stem of
the eyedropper. LEE finally picks up the eyedropper, then
looks at the small puddle of silver.

> LEE (CONT)
> Well, there goes most of my bonus
> when we get back.

Self-consciously, LEE looks around to see if anyone saw
this; he finds himself alone. His expression changes from
embarrassment to narcotic greed, and he does another quick
survey to ensure his privacy. LEE inserts the eyedropper,
loads up a dose, and then holds it up to his right eye.
Squeeze of the black rubber bulb, and a glistening silver
drop plummets to his eyeball. LEE doses his other eye, a wan
smile already spreading over his lips. As he screws the
dropper back into the vial, his head begins to loll, and
after a moment he falls face-forward onto the table. He is
out cold for several seconds. Finally he comes to, obviously
groggy and unsure what has just happened. Unsteadily, he
gets up and stumbles out of the room.

As he exits, he walks by a wall of five blank monitors. Each
comes to life by starting a binary cascade as he passes.

34   INT. MEDLAB (MOMENTS LATER)

LEE enters, rubbing his head. LAKE is at an exam table doing
something; she looks up to see LEE.

> LEE
> Hey Lake, got any aspirin? I got a
> killer headache.

Image freezes. View swings to LAKE's pov. Medlab melts in
binary script, replaced by MEDLAB at present. Superimposed
over this, a second wave of binary descends; it is the "new"
type [scene 24]

35   INT. MEDLAB

<pov - LAKE; time = present; 100%>

EMERSON, TINEEL, & LEE are all dead, laying in a loose
triangle on the floor; the pistol is in the middle. LEE's
neck is broken. TINEEL has been shot in the head and has a
growing pool of blood around it. EMERSON also has a
head-wound, with an accompanying flood of the clear gel
fluid. [it does not glisten.]

Superimposed over all this is "new" the binary script font.
Then after ten seconds, "usual" Binary script floods down.
It quickly superimposes over itself and fills the green
[effectively a reverse fade-out].

END